THE PRESIDENT'S OWN

Lieutenant Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES
October 5, 2014 at 2:00 P.M.
John Philip Sousa Band Hall
Marine Barracks Annex
Washington, DC

Kenji Bunch (b. 1973)

"The Three G's" (2005)

SSgt Sarah Hart, viola

György Ligeti (1923–2006)

Six Bagatelles for Wind Quintet (1953)

Allegro con spirito
Rubato; Lamentoso
Allegro grazioso
Presto ruvido
Adagio; Mesto
Molto vivace; Capriccioso

GySgt Elisabeth Plunk, flute
SSgt Tessa Vinson, oboe
MSgt Vicki Gotcher, clarinet
GySgt Bernard Kolle, bassoon
GySgt Jennifer Paul, horn

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Brandenburg Concerto No. 6 in B-flat, BWV 1051

Allegro
Adagio ma non tanto
Allegro

MSgt Christopher Shieh and SSgt Tam Tran, viola
SSgt Charlaine Prescott and SSgt Caroline Bean Stute, viola da gamba
MGySgt Marcio Botelho, cello
MSgt Glenn Dewey, double bass
SSgt Christopher Schmitt, harpsichord

INTERMISSION

Johannes Brahms (1833–97)

Piano Quartet in C minor, Opus 60

Allegro non troppo
Scherzo: Allegro
Andante
Finale: Allegro comodo

GySgt Janet Bailey, violin
SSgt Tam Tran, viola
MGySgt Marcio Botelho, cello
SSgt Christopher Schmitt, piano

The Fall Chamber Music Series will continue Sunday, Oct. 12 at 2:00 P.M. in John Philip Sousa Band Hall at the Marine Barracks Annex in Washington, D.C. The program will feature the works of Bach, Arnold, Prokofiev, and Stravinsky.

PROGRAM NOTES

"The Three Gs" (2005)

Kenji Bunch (b. 1973)

Hailed by the New York Times as "a composer to watch," Kenji Bunch blends wit, exuberance, lyricism, and unpredictable stylistic infusions in music that is both fresh and accessible. His works have been performed by more than forty orchestras, are regularly broadcast on national radio, and are available on a variety of record labels. An accomplished violist, Bunch performs his own music and maintains a versatile performing career with folk, jazz, rock, and alternative groups.

Bunch's 2005 piece "The 3 Gs" features the unaccompanied viola in a driving rock feel. The title refers to the unique tuning of the viola required for the work. Both the highest and lowest strings are lowered to the pitch G, changing the instrument's four strings from ADGC to GDGG. Bunch is not alone in his exploration of nonstandard tuning, a technique called scordatura, meaning "mistuning" in Italian. Johann Sebastian Bach, Antonio Vivaldi, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and Gustav Mahler all wrote pieces that use scordatura to create new possibilities for harmonies and transform the sound of familiar instruments.

Six Bagatelles for Wind Quintet (1953)

György Ligeti (1923–2006)

György Ligeti was a European avant garde composer whose works have enjoyed popularity in the United States. His music was featured in the Stanley Kubrick movies *2001: A Space Odyssey* and *Eyes Wide Shut.* Ligeti was born to Hungarian Jewish parents in Dicsőszentmárton in Transylvania, Romania and immigrated to Hungary with his parents in 1929. After World War II he studied composition at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest and graduated in 1949. His teachers included Zoltán Kodály, Ferenc Farkas, and Sándor Veress. Ligeti was a professor at the Liszt Academy from 1950 to 1956 before fleeing to Austria after the Hungarian Revolution. Like Kodály, Ligeti was an ethnomusicologist with a deep passion for the folklore and language of his native Hungary. This inspiration formed the core of his musical compositions.

The Six Bagatelles for Wind Quintet are a series of miniatures. Ligeti arranged them from a set of eleven piano pieces composed in the early 1950s titled *Musica ricercata*. In the piano set, the first piece is limited to just two notes of the chromatic scale with another tone of the scale added to each successive piece until all twelve are used in the final movement. For the wind quintet adaption, Ligeti chose the pieces that use four, six, eight, nine, ten, and eleven notes. The Bagatelles display Ligeti's affinity for folk melodies coupled with driving and repetitive rhythmic patterns. The fifth Bagatelle is dedicated to Béla Bartók, with whom Ligeti shared a similar compositional style.

Brandenburg Concerto No. 6 in B-flat, BWV 1051

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

The Six Brandenburg Concertos are among Johann Sebastian Bach's best known compositions. Bach dedicated these works to Christian Ludwig, the Margrave of Brandenburg and although Bach titled these works, Six Concerts Avec plusiers Instruments, it wasn't until the nineteenth century that a prominent Bach biographer referred to them as the "Brandenburg" Concertos. This would become the name forever associated with these works. Wishing to move on from his employer Prince Leopold in Cöthen, Bach compiled and arranged these concertos from some of his earlier compositions and sent

them to the Margrave in hopes of finding a new position in Brandenburg. Sadly, this gift was so insignificant to the Margrave that he never bothered to acknowledge Bach nor did he ever have the concertos performed. It is said that the Brandenburg Concertos were left in the Margrave's library untouched and uncatalogued in a stack of random scores until his death, only to be sorted through for the sole purpose of dividing the Margrave's estate to his heirs.

Unique, unconventional, and even revolutionary are terms that have been used to describe the Sixth Brandenburg Concerto. Its layout appears to be a simple three-movement work consisting of an Allegro first movement with contrapuntal material, an Adagio ma non troppo second movement, and an Allegro third movement with gigue and rondo elements. With this description, there isn't anything particularly unusual about this concerto. However, Bach's unique scoring makes this concerto different from a typical Concerto Grosso, especially the elevation of each of the two viola parts to a more substantial soloistic role.

During the Baroque era, the violin and the viola da gamba (a fretted six-string instrument played between the knees with a bow) were used in a variety of ways as virtuosic solo instruments. It's clear where the violin stands in terms of the hierarchy of musical instruments, but many may not be aware of the aristocratic status of the viola da gamba which was often performed as a solo instrument in the royal courts of France. It symbolized refinement and cultivated tastes of the highest order. Interestingly, in the Sixth Concerto, Bach completely eliminates the violins and relegates the viola da gambas to a purely accompanimental role, even going so far as to silence them in the second movement. It could be inferred that Bach's scoring of the Sixth Concerto, which favors the lower registers, would be dark, heavy, and sombre. In the end however, the opposite is true as this work comes across as surprisingly lively, warm, and brilliant.

Piano Quartet in C minor, Opus 60

Johannes Brahms (1833–97)

Primary education has its "3 Rs" and music has its "3 Bs:" Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms. Johann Sebastian Bach, the apotheosis of the Baroque period; Ludwig van Beethoven, central to the Classical period (some might say he transitioned from the Classical to the Romantic); and Johannes Brahms, the epitome of Romanticism. Of these three, Brahms is additionally known as the "musician's composer."

The Piano Quartet in C minor is the third (and last) of Brahms' piano quartets and stands in the chronological center of Brahms' work and lifespan. Composed in 1875, when Brahms was forty-two years old, it displays many of the hallmark traits for which Brahms is known: rich harmonic and motivic development within the framework of a traditional form and hidden (or maybe not so hidden) musical references. This last point is more a matter of speculation, since Brahms is mostly silent on the subject; but listeners have heard in the opening of the final movement of this quartet a quote from Mendelssohn's Piano Trio in C minor and possibly even of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.

The choice of the key of C, a favorite of Brahms,' and in the minor mode, is often understood to be a reference to the first letter of Clara Schumann's name. She was, by all indications, the lifelong object of his affections and devotion. Unusual for the era, C minor is maintained throughout the first two movements probably because the first of these movements ends with a higher than usual degree of harmonic ambivalence. This either prepares the listener or exaggerates the shock of key choice in the third movement: E major. This being Brahms, it is hard to think of a gentler, more tender shock than the opening of this third movement. C minor returns for the final movement and the whole quartet ends in major mode, a signature gesture intended, perhaps, to convey hope.